As the funds being provided under the PMGSY are inadequate to finance a Programme of this magnitude, steps have been taken to generate additional financial resources including, by way of borrowings from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. Loan Agreements have been signed with the World Bank for $ 399.5 m and with ADB for $ 400 m. Rs. 300 crore has been budgetted in 2004-05 on this account.

Arsenic poisoning of ground water

660. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that several districts of the States and eastern region have the problem of arsenic poisoning of the ground water;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a mission existed under Government earlier to address this issue;

(c) if so, the details thereof and point of time when this was discontinued; and

(d) whether Government has decided to restore the mission and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI A. NARENDRA): (a) As per the quality survey ordered in March 2000, the State Government have reported 5,029 habitations in the rural areas of the country with arsenic content in ground water higher than the permissible limit. Out of these, 4,973 habitations are in West Bengal, 45 in Bihar and 11 in Chhattisgarh.

(b) and (c) Rural drinking water is a State subject. Government of India provides financial and technical assistance to States to accelerate coverage of rural habitations through a centrally sponsored scheme, namely Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). The National Drinking Water Mission was set up in 1986, renamed as Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM) in 1991, for assisting State Governments in providing adequate quantity of drinking water of acceptable quality on a long term basis by improving performance and cost effectiveness of the on-going rural drinking water supply programmes.

Helping State Government in tackling water-quality problems in the rural areas in one of the objectives of RGNDWM. Sub-Mission programmes were introduced in 1992-93 to tackle water quality and sustainability problems. During 1994-98, four projects to tackle water quality problems proposed by the West Bengal Government were sanctioned under the Arsenic Sub-mission programme by RGNDWM on the funding pattern of 75:25 between Centre and State. These were implemented by the State Government.

Helping State Governments to tackle water quality problems, through financial and technical inputs, continues to be an objective of RGNDWN. With effect from 1/4/1998, however, the power to sanction projects under Sub-mission programme were delegated to the State Governments. There is no change in funding pattern of 75:25 between Centre and State for tackling water quality problems. 15% of ARWSP funds released to States are earmarked for tackling water quality problems. Fully covered States can spend higher proportion of funds on projects for tackling water quality problems, with prior approval of the Central Government.

(d) Does not arise.

Contribution of State Governments towards Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

661. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) how much the State Government are to bear towards gainful employment under the rural employment guarantee scheme; and

(b) the details of National Common Minimum Programme in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL): (a) to (b) The proposal to enact a Central Legislation for the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which aims to enhance livelihood security to poor households in rural areas by providing atleast 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to every poor household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual labour, is under consideration of the Government.